

Act on Food Safety

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Introduction of food safety programs for highest risk food businesses in the ACT

In December 2003, the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council agreed that food safety programs become mandatory in the following identified highest risk food business sectors:

- food service, whereby potentially hazardous food is served to vulnerable populations;
- harvesting, processing and distributing raw oysters and other bivalves;
- catering operations serving food to the general public; and
- food businesses producing manufactured and fermented meats.

In the preparation of a food safety program, food businesses must consider the following:

i. Examination: The food business must, first of all, examine the existing food handling operations.

ii. Identification: It must then identify potential food safety hazards.

iii. Preparation: The food business must prepare a written food safety program to control the hazards.

iv. Implementation: It must implement and document measures that will control those hazards.

v. Documentation: The food business must keep written records to demonstrate compliance with the food safety program.

Potentially hazardous food means food that has to be kept at certain temperatures to minimise the growth of any pathogenic micro-organisms that may be present in the food or to prevent the formation of toxins in the food.



This issue covers information about the introduction of mandatory food safety programs requirement for four food business sectors identified as highest risk. You can also find golden rules for food businesses in preparing food safely, basic information about *trans* fats, and some water saving tips from ActewAGL.

Introduction of food safety programs continued

The following highest risk food businesses in the ACT will need to introduce mandatory food safety programs:

- hospitals;
- aged care and nursing homes;
- childcare centres which provide potentially hazardous food to children;
- meals on wheels (housebound clients);
- wholesalers of oysters and other bivalves;
- catering operations (public clients – general); and
- producers of manufactured and fermented meats.

A food safety program must be based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. These principles ensure ongoing identification and control of hazards in the production, manufacturing and handling of food, rather than relying on end product standards alone. The food safety program is to be implemented and reviewed by the food business, and is subject to periodic audit by a suitably qualified food safety auditor.

Timeframes for the introduction of mandatory food safety programs

Producers, harvesters, processors and distributors of raw oysters and other bivalves must have food safety programs introduced by 26 May 2007.

Bivalve molluscs include cockles, clams, mussels, oysters, pipis and scallops intended for human consumption, but exclude scallops and pearl oysters, where the only part of the product consumed is the adductor muscle, and spat.

Producers of manufactured and fermented meats will need to have food safety programs by 24 November 2007. Butchers who smoke meat and produce salamis are covered by this requirement.

For food services in which potentially hazardous food is served to vulnerable populations (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes, childcare centres) the mandatory food safety programs will come into effect by 5 October 2008.

A standard for catering operations serving food to the general public, for example, spit roast caterers, etc. has not been finalised yet. At this stage, it is expected that catering businesses serving food to the general public will need to have food safety programs introduced in the second part of 2009.

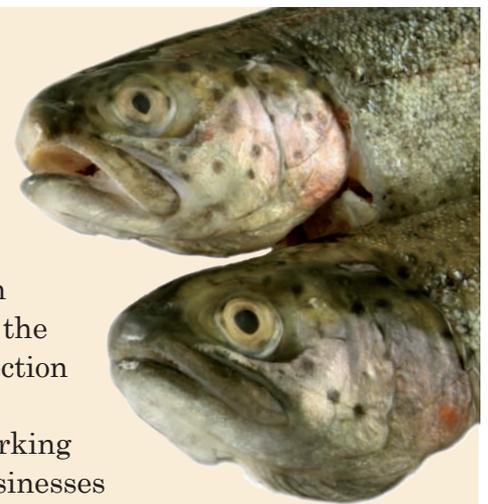
Public health officers from the Health Protection Service are

currently working with food businesses that will need to introduce food safety programs in 2007 when the new food safety requirements will come into effect.

Information concerning the introduction of food safety programs including templates, fact sheets, and brochures will be available on the ACT Health website in the near future.

If you have any questions relating to the introduction of food safety programs, please call the Health Protection Service on phone 6205 1700. Remember, your public health officers are a good source of advice and assistance on all food safety issues.

Ready-to-eat meats are defined as those meats that are intended to be consumed without further heating or cooking and include: cooked or uncooked fermented meat; pate; dried meat; slow cured meat; luncheon meat; cooked muscle meat including ham and roast beef; and other ready-to-eat meat that is susceptible to the growth of pathogens or the production of toxins.



Basic rules for preparing food safely

Cook meat and poultry dishes thoroughly:

Hamburgers, other mince products, rolled joints of meat and seasoned joints of meat must be cooked right through to the centre. Poultry with seasoning must also be cooked right through to the centre of the seasoning. Thaw frozen joints and poultry completely before cooking – otherwise the centre might not cook.

Cool foods rapidly: Put foods into small containers (they will cool more quickly) and cool them in the refrigerator after they have cooled slightly (e.g. after 15 to 20 minutes). Make sure that the fridge is not overloaded.

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold: Do NOT leave hot or cold food standing around at room

temperature. Foods that are chilled should be kept at 5 degrees Celcius or below. Foods that are being kept hot to serve later should be kept above 60 degrees Celcius.

Avoid contaminating ready-to-eat foods: Wash and dry your hands thoroughly before handling any ready-to-eat foods. Cover foods that are being stored. Use clean chopping boards, utensils and other cooking equipment. Wash chopping boards and utensils and rinse in very hot water between foods. Use a dishwasher if available.

Do not cook foods too far in advance: If you must cook foods in advance ensure there is room in the refrigerator to chill them properly.

Reheat foods rapidly and thoroughly – until steaming hot.

Follow strict personal hygiene: Do not cough or sneeze over unprotected food. Wash your hands after using a tissue or a handkerchief – and most importantly, after using the toilet. Wear clean clothing.

If you are sick avoid handling food: Tell your employer if you are sick! There may be other jobs you can do at work that don't require food handling.

Remember! The health and hygiene of food handlers along with good cleaning, sanitising and temperature control measures are vital for the health of the consumer and sends important messages about the business to consumers.

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trans fats

Recently there has been some media coverage on *Trans* fats, so we bring you some basics on *trans* fats or *trans* fatty acids.

There are two main types of fats – saturated and unsaturated. Fats that are saturated tend to be more solid at room temperature. Fats that are unsaturated tend to be liquid at room temperature. *Trans* fats are a type of unsaturated fat. They are formed when liquid vegetable oils are partially hydrogenated or 'hardened' for use as spreads such as margarine, cooking fats for deep-frying and shortening for baking.

Trans fats can pose a health risk. They can be found in cookies, crackers, icing, potato chips, margarine and microwave popcorn. Foods high in *trans* fats increase blood cholesterol levels. *Trans* fats must

be declared on the labels if a nutrition claim is made in respect of cholesterol or fatty acids.

It is heartening to know that Australians consume a low level of *trans* fats, with only 0.6 per cent of their daily energy intake coming from *trans* fats.

It was recently announced that the industry will be working with the newly established Australia and New Zealand Collaboration on *Trans* fats to reduce levels of *trans* fats in the food supply.

Did you know? In December 2006, New York City banned artificial *trans* fats at all restaurants. Restaurants in the city will be required to eliminate the artificial *trans* fats from all of their foods by July 2008.

In the Kitchen: ActewAGL's Water Saving Tips for Your Business

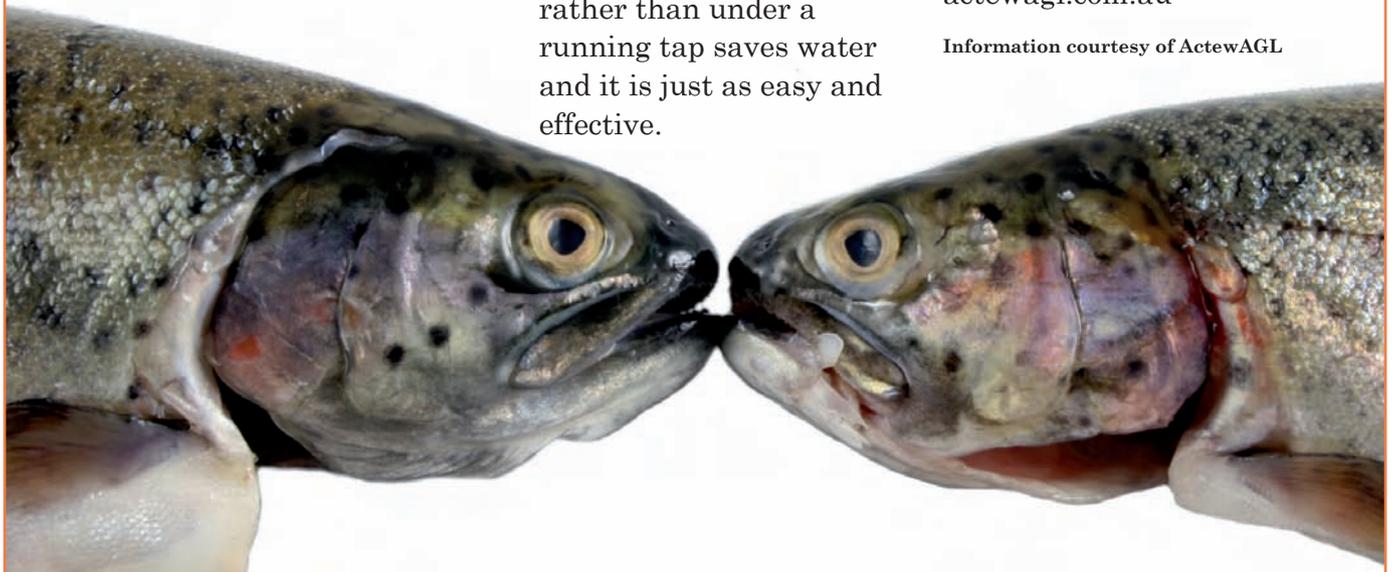
Saving water is everyone's responsibility. Businesses can reduce how much water they use in the kitchen by implementing smart practices in cleaning of food and dishes.

- Don't rinse dishes before loading them into your dishwasher. Use the "Rinse & Hold" setting instead.
- Lever or mixer taps (with a single lever or knob) let you find the right water temperature quickly. This means staff won't waste water trying to get the balance right.
- Encourage staff to wait until they have a full load in the dishwasher before using it.
- Rinsing your dishes in a plugged sink or bowl rather than under a running tap saves water and it is just as easy and effective.

If you run a kitchen, the most water efficient methods for cooking vegetables are micro-waving, steaming or using a pressure cooker. You can also cut down on water loss through evaporation by using tight lids on pots and simmering instead of boiling rapidly.

For information on water conservation please contact ActewAGL on 6248 3131 or visit the website www.actewagl.com.au

Information courtesy of ActewAGL



ENGLISH	If you need interpreting help, telephone:
ARABIC	إذا احتجت لمساعدة في الترجمة الشفوية ، إتصل برقم الهاتف :
CHINESE	如果你需要传译员的帮助，请打电话：
CROATIAN	Ako trebate pomoć tumača telefonirajte:
GREEK	Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα τηλεφωνήστε στο
ITALIAN	Se avete bisogno di un interprete, telefonate al numero:
PERSIAN	اگر به ترجمه شفاهی احتیاج دارید به این شماره تلفن کنید:
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TURKISH	Tercümana ihtiyacınız varsa lütfen telefon ediniz:
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